

THE WILSON FAMILY
IMPORTANT ATTORNEYS

BY

JAMES M. HOTCHKISS, JR.

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<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mlwilson/>

From early beginnings in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia in the eighteenth century to major contributions to the history of Missouri, Colorado, and California, this is the story of three generations of the Wilson family.

The Wilson Family, Important Attorneys is complete unto itself. However, it is intended to be part of a larger volume of my family history. Further segments will be produced in later years.

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November 20, 1995

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CHAPTER ONE

WILLIAM WILSON AND SONS

“I do not know how many children William Wilson and his wife had, but I do know that they had four fine ambitious sons who came to Missouri around 1820. Their names were Robert, John, William, and David Wilson.”

The above paragraph is a quote from a letter written by Annette D. Dabney in 1979. Mrs Dabney continues, “These young men first settled in a place named Old Franklin, Missouri, then moved nearby to Fayette, Missouri in Howard County. All studied law after coming to Missouri, and several became judges. William moved to Marshall, Mo. John later moved to California.”

The Wilson family came to Missouri from Staunton, Augusta County, Virginia. William was the youngest of eight children of Robert Wilson, who probably came to Virginia from Pennsylvania. Robert bought 461 acres of farm land in Augusta County in 1755 from his brother, who had acquired it ten years earlier.

When you are the last of eight children, with five brothers ahead of you, the likelihood of inheriting land from your father is usually poor. That society usually practiced a variation of primogeniture, leaving most of the land to the oldest son. This was a necessary practice to keep land from being divided into small, uneconomical pieces. There is no concrete evidence, but one source says that William was a lawyer in Virginia before he came to Missouri. It would be logical for him to try to learn a profession rather than wait hopelessly for a farm of his own.

Robert Wilson died in 1768 and left the property to two of William’s older brothers. Good things come to him who waits. William waited 48 years until 1816. In the meantime brother Robert had one child who predeceased him. Brother David never married. The entire property was willed by David in 1816 to William.

At that time William was probably well past the age of 60. His oldest boy was 26, and the youngest was 9. It was a little late to start a successful career in farming. We don’t know what the condition of the property was when William inherited it, but we do know from the county records that he sold 200 acres in 1817. The record of deeds of trust show that William and his sons placed nine separate deeds of trust on the property between 1818 and 1821. What was left of the equity interest was sold in 1821.

It is quite reasonable that William wanted a new start in 1820. Many settlers had already moved from Virginia to Saline County, Missouri. Mrs. Dabney says that David did not come until 1830, but William and his wife and the other three boys all left Virginia in 1820 or shortly thereafter.

William’s life was relatively uneventful. We know little about him, and he passed quietly into obscurity. The exciting lives were those of his children. It was a remarkable, powerful and interesting family.

The six children of William Wilson and his wife, Catharine (Yancey) Wilson were as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>
John	28 Jan 1790
David	12 Jul 1792
Mary (Polly)	2 Aug 1796
Robert	6 Nov 1800
Nancy	23 May 1803
William Adair (W. A.)	17 Dec 1807

CHAPTER TWO

JOHN WILSON

John was 30 years old when he came to Missouri, settling in Fayette, Howard County. It took a few years to get established as a good attorney and an active politician. He was appointed circuit attorney in 1824 for the district that included Howard County. Using his excellent way with words, he spent a year as editor of the local newspaper.

Because John became famous, there is a wealth of published material about him. I am especially indebted to the collection at the California State Library and to a wonderful article by Frederic A. Culmer published by the California Historical Society. From the written material a portrait emerges of a brilliant, hard working man who sometimes drifted off into a dream world. He was an imposing figure, six foot three inches tall. In California, he wore stove pipe hats and smoked cigars to add to the towering image. Although he never did stand face to face with Abraham Lincoln and look him square in the eye, he could have done so.

As a lawyer and politician, John had to have good acting and performing ability. Whether his sometimes loss of temper was real or staged is not certain. For sure, it was awesome. John belonged to the Whig party, which was a minority in Missouri. One letter in the Leonard collection describes a barbecue in Fayette to celebrate the Fourth of July. Someone made an unauthorized speech, which teemed with abuse of John Quincy Adams and praise for Andrew Jackson. According to the letter, "Then Wilson got up and spoke bitterly. He stood surly as a bore, wielding a three foot cane around his head." Meantime several people tried to pacify the crowd to avoid a full scale riot. Cane wielding proved ineffective. Jackson carried every county in Missouri in the 1828 election.

John was always interested in land speculation, preferably in large amounts. The planned town of New Madrid, Missouri died when the settlers moved out after severe earthquakes in 1811. John was involved in trying to claim large portions of the area. He once wrote to Abiel Leonard that he had purchased from the heirs a half interest in a claim to fifteen million acres. He added that the heirs were pressing him to buy the other half.

John was a veteran of the War of 1812. He was with a company that was organized in Augusta County, Virginia. When he was discharged in 1815, he had attained the rank of orderly sergeant. John was not ashamed of his military career, but he probably thought being a general would have been better. Perhaps he was jealous of his brother Robert, who was a brigadier general in the Mormon War in 1837. For whatever reason, John started calling himself General John Wilson. It caught on, and he was routinely referred to as General in Missouri and later in California. Who was going to argue the point with a wild eyed, cane swinging, six foot three inch giant?

He was born in Tennessee, lived in Virginia, and got his start in Missouri, but he achieved his greatest fame in San Francisco. He was a 49er, coming to California in 1849 by way of Utah. In 1849 he was appointed Indian Agent. The great historian, Hubert Howe Bancroft describes his instructions, "In 1849 John Wilson was appointed Indian agent at Salt Lake.... The total sum allowed him for presents to Indians, rent, fuel, stationery, forage, the purchase of two horses,

traveling and incidental expenses was \$1,500. What portion of this amount the Indians were likely to receive in the way of presents the reader will judge for himself.

“Wilson states in his report that to gain anything like a personal knowledge of the actual situation of these tribes would require five years travel. The report contains much that was already known about the geography of the country, but very little about the Indian tribes. One would think that he might at least have learned something from the Mormons.”

A new Indian agent was appointed in 1851. John had already gone on to other activities. John learned plenty from the Mormons, but it was not about the Indians. Slavery was a major divisive issue in the country in 1849. Zachary Taylor was President, and he was looking for ways to avoid direct confrontation between slave and free groups. Utah and California were important, so was secrecy. I believe the Indian Agent title was a cover for John’s real mission, to ask Utah and California to establish independent states and later join the Union as free states.

John had worked very hard for Zachary Taylor’s successful campaign for President in 1848. The two were personal friends with common roots in Virginia. It is known that John and Zachary had a long meeting early in 1849, during which cabinet appointments were discussed. It is quite reasonable that Zachary Taylor might give an important secret mission to John. In his lengthy article Frederic A. Culmer discusses in some detail what John actually did and the possibility that he was indeed on a secret mission.

Following is a quotation from another section of Bancroft’s book:

“It is worthy of note also, that in September 1849, the people of California, incensed by the dilatory action of congress, followed the example of the Mormons by framing a constitution of their own. On the 6th of that month, by order of President Taylor, General John Wilson, then United States Indian Agent, held a consultation with Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards and others, with a view to the temporary amalgamation of the states of California and Deseret, in order to avoid possible difficulties on the slavery question.

“It was agreed that a memorial should be drawn up, asking for a convention of all the people of Upper California, both East and West of the Sierra Nevada, for the purpose of consolidating the two states in one that should include all the territory acquired from Mexico. At the beginning of 1851 the union was to be dissolved, each state retaining its own constitution. ...John Wilson and Amasa Lyman were sent as delegates to California, and presented the memorial to the legislature, but the governor of the state, reviewing the proposals in his message, one by one, condemned them all. ... the legislature refused to entertain the memorial, and nothing was accomplished.”

Some sources set John’s arrival in California in 1850. However, the newspaper, Alta California, clearly reports his arrival in December, 1849. Simultaneously, he proved his independence and did his first of many public services in California. His army escort was forbidden by its own special orders to branch off of the Oregon Trail. John insisted on going to Goose Lake, which is in the northeast part of California on the Oregon border. John also had not gotten along with Captain Morris, leader of the military escort, and he was certainly glad to be rid of him.

Goose Lake was a popular emigrant route. After the Donner party disaster, there was public concern about emigrants becoming snowbound. John had arranged with General Smith for the appropriation of government funds if needed to rescue stranded travelers. Wilson was able to report that all the travelers had arrived successfully. He then rented a whaleboat for his family and came down the Sacramento River to Sacramento. Just one week later John was named President of the Relief of the Poor Committee in Sacramento.

One of John's obituaries states that he was appointed Naval Agent for the Pacific Coast in 1850 by his relative, President Zachary Taylor. I have searched for this genealogical connection, but I have not yet discovered any proof. Certainly, he deserved the political appointment. He also began the practice of law in San Francisco, which he continued to his death in 1877. One of the obituaries said that since 1850 he had been identified with most of the public interests of the state.

Politics gives and politics taketh away. John worked for Zachary Taylor's presidential campaign and was then entrusted with an important mission in the West. His reward was a political appointment as Naval Agent. However, times change. Millard Fillmore became president. In a letter to his son John wrote:

"We lost everything in coming here in 1849, left all in the mountains and came into California on foot. My library and all was gone. We came here and our cheapest expense we could live at (and live miserably at that) was \$1500 per month. I had an office, Navy Agent. Before I made a dollar by it, by the black hearted ingratitude of Fillmore, that office was abolished and given to another. I went of course to the practice of the law, and as usual that practice ran into real estate, and my profits are all locked up in land."

John was simply continuing the land speculation that he had begun in Missouri. In those days land title was sometimes vague. A single piece of land could be the subject of multiple lawsuits. Since the original grants were large, the lawsuits often embraced millions of acres. At the time of his death, John was deeply involved in what was called the "Valliere" claim. His interest in the claim, which was then in the Missouri courts, was specifically mentioned in his will.

The story is told by Ophelia Wilson Harkness in a letter to the California State Library, "When John Wilson was about 70 years old, he went to Cuba and learned to speak the Spanish language. While there, he found in an old abandoned tobacco warehouse, where the government records were stored, land records to a vast amount of land in the United States, covering six or seven states. It was located where the Louisiana Purchase was. I think this claim was filed at Jefferson City, Missouri and had been placed before the Supreme Court in Washington at the time of John's death. E. T. Wilson wanted to send John David Wilson to law school to study to be a lawyer so that he could fight the Valliere case, but John David wanted to be a teacher instead, and he refused the offer."

John was 59 years old when he reached California. Stripped of his best political connections, he had to earn a living practicing law. Ophelia Wilson says that his income was very great, but his family was very extravagant. There was possibly a kernel of truth there, but John saw himself quite differently. In a letter to his son he wrote, "Your mother is in fine health, but has had a very hard time of it in this country. It has been and still is a very hard country on women who do

their duty. Thousands of them have failed to do their duty and consequently ran their husbands to enormous expenses, and most of them have failed and become insolvent. Your mother has faithfully stood up to save me from expense or else long ago I would have had to give up all and take the insolvent's oath.

"I trust when I am gone, you will all remember this. Many a painful sensation it has given me to see her toiling at what she has never done before and what she ought not to have been forced to do. Yet she has never failed to associate with the first society and has many friends here. She has never had any servant but an Indian boy."

Life was difficult in San Francisco for an honest man, according to John. He describes several properties in which he owns a percentage interest. Then he goes on to say, "All these I have secured as fees. I have not bought or speculated at all, neither bought nor sold. The consequence is we have lived extremely poor, and I have the utmost difficulty to pay for bread and meat. All has to be cash here. We pay for everything in cash. There is no credit.

"Then to add to all this, I have not succeeded very well in my profession. Soon after we came here, it began to be the practice to "fee" judges and jurors and sheriffs instead of lawyers. Then the lawyers who held the best position with these judges and sheriffs were almost the only ones likely to be employed. Therefore, I was soon overlooked because, thank God, I believe I retain the name of being an honest man as well as lawyer. Often in large cases have I been told, we are going to fee so and so, for he can arrange it with the judge. I know you will not do so. These times are passing away, and we are gradually getting honest judges on the bench."

Another letter is even more indignant about the system, "Many great fortunes have been made here, mostly by luck, often by gross corruption, and many well conducted things predicated on stability of the present existing laws, that failed from a change of judges.

"Our supreme court has been changed, either in whole or part dozens of times, always filled by the bold and pushing speculation having large contingent interests in real estate, for the safety of which it was absolutely necessary to doctor up former decisions to form precedents to govern by the time their case reached that court. I lost in one case at least \$60,000 by the opposing attorney getting on the supreme bench in time to give the casting vote, which he did not hesitate to do. The law as it stood when I acquired my interest was thus changed, at my expense. I mention this to show you that an itinerant judiciary is a greater curse to the people here than Napoleon the 3rd has proved to be to the French."

In a letter to Abiel Leonard April 11, 1852, John expresses similar complaints about the political system, "My professional prospects are tolerably fair. ...Corruption, bribes and subornation of judges and witnesses has undoubtedly disgraced this country and its judiciary. Many lawyers have been securing business by stating to clients they had an arrangement with the judge that he would decide for them their cases. I have absolutely lost more than a dozen of clients in the last 5 or 6 months who were my devoted friends. They would come and tell me such a lawyer informed them he was in secret partnership with the judges and for that reason they would try them. ...We know there have been large and many bribes given... These causes have forced me to stand back and in fact to be disgusted with the practice where you know your case was to be

decided by money and not by the law. These disgraces are beginning to wear off, and these filthy incumbents will soon all be cleared out.”

In another letter written to his son in 1875 at the age of 85, John describes his daily routine, “My general health, thank God, is as good as ever. I have no aches or pains, usually said to be brought on by age. I eat and sleep as well as ever and nearly do as much work as ever. My office is not quite a mile from our house (that is where we reside, for we have lost our house by direct perjury). I walk down to it after an early breakfast and am there nearly an hour before our legal fraternity in general are at their offices. (We all number about 600.) I walk home about 4 P.M. and dine about 5 P.M. I often have business in several of our 11 superior courts the same day. When I get home, I have footed it from 3 to 5 miles. I go to bed before 9 and am up with the sun. First I read my bible, then comes the newspaper. Then breakfast comes, and then down to the office and answer correspondence. This is the 8th letter I have written this morning, yet in the forenoon. There is no despondency in me. I rely on continual exertion and on God.”

John’s business investments in California were about what you would have expected, a lot of land and a little craziness. He bought a one third interest in a cattle ranch of 18,000 acres, which included the newly created town of Red Bluff on the Sacramento River. He also entered into a partnership to develop a combination vegetable garden and wash yard near San Francisco. He was also deeply involved, probably innocently, in a wonderful, headline grabbing scam.

All it takes is a little imagination and a lot of hope. It helps if the story is about gold and the year is 1851. The Klamath River in northern California ends at a high bluff against which the surf continually dashes. It is known that there is some gold in the bluff and that the waves have washed it out and that fine grains of gold can be found in the black sand of the beach.

In his History of California Theodore S. Hittell writes, “The next great mining excitement was that of Gold Bluff in the Spring of 1851. This originated in reports, industriously circulated by interested parties, that the sands of the ocean beach for miles south of Klamath River were largely composed of gold. ... According to the reports referred to, these sands were nearly one fourth, some said one half, gold and all that was necessary to be done was to shovel it up at low tide and carry it off. It was even said that the quantity was enough to yield each of nine persons, who claimed to own the auriferous beach, the incredible sum of forty-three million dollars. Meanwhile the pretended owners, who had made themselves busy in spreading these reports—and among whom the most active perhaps were John Wilson, usually known as General John Wilson, and John A. Collins—organized a company at San Francisco for the purpose of disposing of the property and proceeded at once to put illimitable quantities of the stock on the market at the rate of a hundred dollars per share. Collins, the secretary of the company, who told the largest stories, was an enthusiast and appeared to believe and doubtless did believe all he said, and his earnestness induced others to believe and to invest.”

Under the headline, “A New El Dorado” Alta California reported January 9, 1951 [sic], on the return of a steamer from the Klamath: “...the Chesapeake came into port, bringing back five or six of the ‘prospectors’ Gen. John Wilson and John A. Collins Esq., among the number. A meeting of the stock-holders was called, to hear the result of the expedition, which meeting we attended. ... General Wilson says that thousands of men can not exhaust this gold in thousands of years. ...”

It is not disclosed how much, if anything, John made from his other investments plus the Pacific Mining Company. He could have been an innocent dupe of a salted mine. We do know that at one time he owned large parcels of land in Alameda County. His will does not specifically name individual properties, but he claimed ownership of land in California and Oregon as well as the Valliere claim in several states. We also know that at his funeral Governor Peter H. Burnett was one of the pallbearers.

There was a lot of excitement over the Pacific Mining Company. Almost 120 years later a fictionalized version of the story was published. In that version Wilson and Collins kept all proceeds in cash. They bought a fast ship, loading all the cash thereon. Then they used a lookout to determine when the first boatload of angry, swindled investors was coming back from Klamath. With sufficient warning, they got on their ship and sailed away. Although they were chased, they were never caught. They disappeared forever.

I think John would have liked the story. He certainly enjoyed excitement. He had also become a great booster for the State of California. Following are excerpts from his letter to Judge Leonard dated April 11, 1852:

“We have today (as well as many others) such a day as you have never seen or felt nor ever will see or feel till you come to California. My wife and I are at home enjoying a serenity, calmness, sublimity of atmosphere nowhere else to be felt, with a view from our verandah for its extent, for its variety of scenic matter with all the city, all the shipping, all the bay, all its islands making in all one of variety, extent of life and beauty that can nowhere else be seen in all the U. S. ... And all this would be plain to you in 15 minutes were you here just to enjoy it on our verandah. ... Then let us have the railroad across the plains (when you and Mrs. L. can come and stay with us one week and be at home again at the end of three from the time you left home) and if there is any limit to the gold it will be found out. There is none.

“In another thing you are greatly deceived. You underrate our country. I mean the people who have not been here. In its agricultural capacity, our soil in point of richness and depth is entirely beyond all you know.”

Following is a letter written by John Wilson April 5, 1857. The content clearly shows John’s activity and importance in the Whig Party.

“Sir: Our Whig general committee have appointed a committee of their body to correspond with our leading friends in the state. I am a member of that committee. Our object is to offer to our friends all over the state the hand of fellowship and to urge them in the most respectful as well as the most urgent manner to wake up, organize and prepare for the coming contest the next summer in our general election. We also wish to enquire what are the views and feelings of our friends in your quarter of the state to ascertain as far as practical our supposed strength as well as whom they desire to run for gov, Lt gov, congress, supreme judge etc. so that we may gain all the information we can so as to act wisely in the selections to be made at the State Convention here in May...

“I have not the honor of a personal acquaintance with you but must as a member of the Whig committee address myself to you, therefore I enclose one or two of my professional cards which

will tell you where to find me if you should come to this city. I most earnestly hope I may have the pleasure of a visit from you before you leave for your home, a part of the country that is so highly spoke of that I desire much to see it. I hope to do so this summer. My purpose is reasonably employed to attend all the sessions of the Board of Commissioners for the confirmation of land titles (if one is needed) in all parts of the state, having devoted much time to this business in four other states, I have rather a fondness for such a practice.

“I will be exceedingly glad as far as is consistent with your opportunity in a climate you would mention this to your friends. I have the honor to be your obedient servant, John Wilson.”

The letter clearly shows that John is speaking from a position of power. Although he is polite and requests cooperation, it is clear that he is used to response and respect.

John Wilson’s importance in California can perhaps be measured posthumously. Over fifty years after his death, the Oakland Post Enquirer displayed prominently on page one on March 20, 1928 photographs of Gen. John Wilson and his wife, Ann R. Pullian Wilson. He was described as taking a prominent part in the exciting times of the early fifties. The occasion for the treatment was the discovery of a letter to Wilson from the adventurer, William Walker. The letter mentions John’s son, Micajah, who accompanied Walker on an expedition to Nicaragua.

The fact that the newspaper happened to be running a serial story of Walker’s exploits at the time unquestionably enhanced the merit of the story of the discovery of the letter. Still, a letter to somebody besides Gen. John Wilson, who had been dead for fifty years, would not likely cause photographs of the recipient to appear on page one.

Of the four brothers, it is probable that Senator Robert Wilson is the most important. On the other hand, John is the most interesting. He has a secure place in history. Further research would probably reveal even more of his remarkable career. In the material that I have compiled there is only one reference to the relationship between John and Robert. In a letter to his son, John wrote, “I am only sorry I have not the means of paying off your little debt. I think your Uncle Robert ought to have at least loaned you that sum, but he never loaned your father any either, but I never asked him. Still he knew well often that I needed it greatly. He always was a close man, and therefore his prosperity.”

CHAPTER THREE

JOHN'S FAMILY

The meticulously prepared family record book compiled by Adair Wilson is filled with names, places and dates that have proved to be accurate. For some reason, Adair wrote for John only the cryptic “married three times”. In my research, I could find evidence of only two marriages. The first wife’s maiden name was McCoun. The second wife was Ann R. Pullian. I have not been able to identify the time nor location of either marriage. However, I was successful in identifying the children from each marriage. If there was a third wife, I have no idea of who she was or when they married. It is clear from the obituaries and from letters that the first wife died relatively young. Ann Pullian was the wife who came to California in 1849.

Children with the first wife were David, born 2 Nov 1813, and John (Jr.). All I know about the latter is that he died before 1877 and had three children, who were named in his father’s will.

Children with Ann Pullian were as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>
Susan	unknown
Micajah	about 1831
Mary Eliza	about 1836
Robert	about 1842

David stayed in Missouri. The letters from John to David are the source of much of the material in the previous chapter. The letters also carried a single repetitive theme; John was sorry that he could neither loan nor give any money to David. He would if he could, but he just never seemed to have any available cash. The letters were still warm and friendly.

David had six children. The first four were girls about whom little is known. The last two boys became teachers, like their father, but with a much wider range.

John David Wilson was born 22 Aug 1862. After attending college in several places, he also taught in several places. He then became the Dean of Psychology and Pedagogy at Missouri State Teachers College. He held that position for ten years then became principal of a school in Memphis, Tennessee. He spoke six languages and was also a hypnotist and mind reader.

James Wesley Wilson was born June 2, 1865. He taught school then later studied medicine. He practiced in Missouri, Arkansas and finally Louisiana. He was licensed as a physician for 62 years, delivering thousands of babies, including his own daughter, during that time until his death at the age of 85.

All four children of the second family came to California. They appear as a family unit with mother and father in the special California census of 1852. The only exception is Susan, who was married the year before.

Micajah carried on the family tradition and became a lawyer. He practiced only briefly. Earlier, he had been a customs inspector. Later he worked as an Indian agent in Mendocino County while simultaneously maintaining a small cattle ranch.

Apparently, Micajah was a restless youth. He found his niche, joining an adventurer named William Walker on an expedition to Central America. Walker wrote John that Micajah's conduct was admirable. John provided his own more detailed description, "Micajah has become a wiser and I hope, a better man, having gained amongst the Walkerites a great name. He went away a wild and rather thoughtless boy weighing 220 pounds. He came back a sober, sedate and thinking man, weighing 160 pounds. He gives evidence of great maturity of manhood."

Unfortunately, adventure called once too often. Micajah was killed somewhere in Honduras in Walker's second expedition. Micajah, his half brother John, and his sister Susan all failed to survive John Wilson.

Mary Eliza was supposed to be John's favorite of all of his children. She received a larger inheritance than the others under his will, but her life was not happy. She married F. O. Wakeman in October, 1854, with the grudging consent of her parents. John wrote about the marriage in 1871, "He had the reputation of being a moral businessman and had been well raised in Philadelphia. He came here with two brothers who then were also clever moral businessmen. Both afterwards became drunkards. Of course, the family remained with us. Mary Eliza never left us.

"Gradually, all three brothers took to drink to excess. One of them is already dead as a drunken vagabond. The third is on the verge of the grave from the same cause. F. O. continued to get worse and worse till about three years ago I told him he could not stay here at my charge any longer. He left then and has been some times in the police stations, sometimes in the Home of Inebriate, and is now in prison on a charge of forgery. I have just been to see some influential friends to see if they can not aid in getting him out that he may leave the country. His crime, if he really committed it, was his drunkenness."

Greater tragedy had struck a few months earlier. Conveying the full depth of his sorrow, John wrote, "We that remain of our family are all in good health, but the prettiest and smartest child of her age (5 years 4 months) ever produced in any of our families, Maude Campbell Wakeman, died about two months ago. Playing in our yard with her little associates, how or why we know not, her clothes got on fire from matches at about 1 P.M., and before any of the family knew it, her clothes were literally burned off her. Several doctors were on the ground in a few minutes, who did all they could, but at half past 7 P.M. she fell as it were on sleep, seemingly without pain, and was dead and her spirit in heaven before the sun's rays had fully withdrawn themselves from the tops of the Sierras. This of all others has been our most terrible misfortune of our lives, which has certainly furnished us many, too many misfortunes to name. This will be with us always. She possessed the most remarkable matured mind. She was the preferred leader of all

her associates of her own age and was a welcome associate of all who knew her of the girls of 15 or 16 years old.

“Had death in his ordinary rounds taken her off, our grief would have been almost inconsolable. As it is, nothing will assuage our grief till we follow after. Enclosed you will find her photograph, with that of her sister Kate, with the long hair.”

CHAPTER FOUR

DAVID, POLLY, AND NANCY WILSON

There is very little to say about David Wilson. I am sure he lived a comfortable but obscure life. With three famous brothers active in politics, David was not going to suffer. He shows in the records as County Tax Collector in 1832 in Saline County.

David did not come to Missouri in 1820 with the other brothers. He had left Augusta County, Virginia to marry Margaret Kinnear in 1819. Eleven years passed before he left Virginia. He died in 1844 at the age of 52, only 14 years after he reached Missouri. He passed quietly into obscurity.

Polly was the oldest of two daughters. She did not achieve fame, but she lived a comfortable life. She married Samuel Grove, son of a relatively wealthy farmer, Windle Grove. This was the first of the interesting marriages between my father's Grove ancestors and my mother's Wilson ancestors.

In 1793 Windle Grove bought 442 acres of farm land in Augusta County. When he died in 1819, he divided the farm between Samuel and his brother Adam. Samuel and Polly had just been married the year before.

Windle Grove was my great-great-great grandfather. The direct descent is through Adam. Adam's granddaughter was my grandmother, Emma Lucretia (Grove) Hotchkiss.

Adam stayed on his half of the farm until his death. Samuel sold his share and moved to Saline County, Missouri. Polly was reunited with her brothers.

Nancy Wilson married Lewis Loop. Lewis' grandfather had moved from Germany to Pennsylvania. His father moved from Pennsylvania to Virginia. They were farmers.

Nancy and Lewis were married in 1824 in Augusta County. They never went to Missouri. They moved to Preble County, Ohio where they presumably continued to farm. The separation from the rest of the family was not total. Nancy's first child was named William Wilson Loop.

CHAPTER FIVE

ROBERT WILSON

Robert Wilson was a Missouri version of his brother, John. He stayed in Missouri to gain his fame. Annette Dabney says, "Robert was my great grandfather. He became one of the most important men in Missouri. He served eight years in the Missouri State Legislature and became United States Senator from Missouri in 1862. He moved to Andrew County, very near to St. Joseph, Missouri, as his daughter, Mary Ann Wilson, had married R. L. McDonald of St. Joseph.

The following quotation is from Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri by Conard: "He was born near Staunton, Virginia in 1800, educated in Virginia. He came to Chariton County, Mo. where he taught school. Afterward he lived in Fayette, working in the office of the Circuit Clerk. In 1823 he was appointed probate judge of Howard County and from 1828 to 1840 served as clerk of the circuit and county of Randolph County. In the meantime, he also studied law under his brother, General John Wilson.

"After seeing service in the Mormon War in 1837 as a brigadier general, he returned to his law practice, becoming one of the highest ranking lawyers of central Missouri. He was elected to the state house of representatives in 1844 and later elected to the state senate for two terms. A decided unionist at the outbreak of the Civil War, Wilson was elected to serve as a delegate to the convention of 1861, ultimately as its president until the convention adjourned. In 1862 he was appointed to the U. S. Senate to fill out a term, serving until 1863. He married Martha Snoddy in Howard County in 1826. She died in 1837. He died in Marshall, Missouri May 10, 1870."

The convention of 1861 referred to above was called to determine the state's attitude toward secession. Robert was sent as a Union representative. he was elected vice president before later succeeding to the presidency. His appointment was not by chance. An able and effective speaker, he spoke often at gatherings sponsored by the Constitutional Union Party.

Speaking as the major speaker at a rally before 12,000 enthusiastic citizens, he attacked the Democratic Party, which was also pro union. He spoke of the Democrats, who were continually asking for help to save the Union. John [sic] insisted that the Union had never been in danger and had never needed saving, except from the Democrats.

These were the times of the great public speakers. There was no television to distract the public. They didn't even have radios. Instead, they came out to hear the politicians speak. Abraham Lincoln rode a long series of brilliant campaign speeches into the White House. Robert Wilson was one of the best speakers in Missouri. He avoided confronting the issue of slavery head on. At a rally in St. Louis he referred to the blacks and to slavery in the territories but said these issues should be disregarded. Attention should be focused on the most important issue of the country's enduring. He pointed out that all earlier attempts to solve the problem of slavery had led only to corruption, bloodshed, and murder. Like a good politician, he offered absolutely no solution to the issue, he recommended that only the future of the nation be envisioned and that

citizens stop discussing “tweedledum and tweedledee”. The people listened to these arguments, and the Constitutional Unionists grew ever more popular.

I think a man as great as Robert Wilson deserved to have his portrait painted by a great artist. Such was the case. The famous artist, George Caleb Bingham, painted Robert’s portrait sometime before 1850. Bingham, like the Wilson family, was born in Augusta County, Virginia and moved to Missouri. He has achieved international fame. His works hang in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. One of his paintings was sold at auction in 1978 for almost a million dollars.

The Robert Wilson portrait is not small. It is an impressive 30 x 25. Ownership has passed from Robert’s daughter to his grandson and great granddaughter. The portrait continues to remain in the family, which is pleasing to me. These are my cousins also.

CHAPTER SIX

WILLIAM ADAIR (W.A.) WILSON

William Adair Wilson is my great grandfather. In June, 1835 he married Mary E. Reeves, daughter of an earlier lieutenant governor of Missouri. Of their seven children, two have special meaning to me. Kate married Dr. John Bright Grove, who was very successful as a physician and political leader. Coincidentally, John Bright Grove was the brother of my grandmother's father on my father's side. The full story of John Bright Grove has been elegantly told by my friend and fellow genealogist, Colonel Robert Neil Grove.

The second child with special meaning to me is Adair Wilson, who is my grandfather, my mother's father. There will be a separate chapter on him later in this report. Adair studied law in San Francisco with his uncle, John Wilson. Later he moved to Virginia City, Nevada and established a newspaper. he became a lifelong friend of the editor of the rival paper, Mark Twain. Adair finally settled in Durango, Colorado where he became judge of the Superior Court.

From relative obscurity in Virginia, the entire Wilson family seemed to suddenly blossom. They and their families included governors, senators, generals, politically powerful, all skilled professional men. William Adair Wilson was one more of this group. He was a staunch old line member of the Whig party and strongly supported the Union in the civil war. He was appointed colonel in the state militia in 1835 and was elected county judge in 1838 and 1840.

He had a certain knack for getting in on the ground floor. Keyetsville, the county seat of Chariton County, was laid out in 1832. A small log house was put up east of the courthouse by Thomas Givens. It was designated a business house with W. A. Wilson in charge.

The town of Marshall was created in 1839. It was a planned community from the beginning, located at the geographical center of Saline County. The records show that W. A. Wilson was there at the start, purchasing a lot for ten dollars. He built his house and stayed till his death. his widow lived on in the house afterwards. In 1847 the Marshall Masonic Lodge was established with nine members. He was one of them.

From 1850 to 1860 William Adair Wilson was the county and circuit clerk and recorder. When the civil war came, he was appointed circuit and county clerk and also provost Marshall with the rank of major. He was appointed lieutenant colonel of the Seventy-first Regiment of the Enrolled Missouri Federal Militia when that group was formed. He filled all the clerkships of the county until his death August 28, 1865.

Following is a direct quotation from History of Saline County, Missouri (1881):

"He was probably better known at Federal headquarters of the state or national government than any other man in this county.... He was a man of more than ordinary ability, and for many years commanded the confidence of the people of Saline County, discharging faithfully all of his official duties. For nearly twenty years prior to the Civil war no man in the county was more generally known or highly respected.

“It is not perhaps saying too much that he formed a nucleus around which the Union element of this county rallied and organized and gained strength. Colonel Wilson was faithful in all the relations of life; as a husband, parent, friend, the same integrity of character and goodness of heart were manifested, gaining for him that respect and confidence which he possessed to an eminent degree.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE REEVES FAMILY

Mary Elizabeth Reeves married William Adair Wilson June 4, 1835. She was the youngest of six children of Benjamin Harrison Reeves. Known as B. H. or Ben, he was an important man in the history of Kentucky and Missouri. Ben was born in Virginia in 1787, but his family moved to the wilderness frontier of Christian County, Kentucky.

In about 1805 there was a small group of family members living in that area. At the age of 18 Ben received his first adult assignment. Aunt Sally was ill and dying. She asked Ben to take her small daughter to live with Aunt Margaret in Virginia. Ben performed his task faithfully. On his way he stopped at the home of his aunt Euphemia. Stopping again on his way back home, he took the time to woo and marry his first cousin, Martha. He was 19. She was about 21. It was quite a surprise for his family when he returned home.

In the following few years Ben established himself as an important leader in the area. In the war of 1812 he was captain of the company from Christian County, rising to the rank of major. After the war, he served in the state legislature until 1818, when he moved to Missouri, taking his mother with him.

In Missouri he was a member of the convention which enacted the first constitution of the state. As a member of the Whig party, he represented Howard County in the legislature until the emergence of Andrew Jackson made his party the minority.

In 1824 Ben was elected lieutenant governor. He could have become governor, since the governor died in 1825. However, Ben had earlier resigned his office to accept a position as one of the commissioners to survey the new federal route from Fort Osage to Santa Fe. In addition to his official duties, he was also known as a prominent trader.

When Martha died in 1835, Ben returned to Kentucky, remarried, and had three more children. He died in 1849.

Much of the material in this chapter is taken from a most remarkable document, written in 1878 by Dr. Thomas Davis Parks, also a first cousin of Ben Reeves. [See [here](#).] At the age of 79, without any notes or records, Dr. Parks wrote 28 pages of the history of his family. It is worth while to trace the family further back, following Dr. Parks' record.

Walter Davis and Martha Cunningham were married about 1750. Martha had moved with her father to Rock Spring, Virginia in 1740. She lived there until her death in 1806. Dr. Parks points out that the early citizens of Augusta County were poor, but they carried the bible with them and read it. If anybody read any verse of the bible to Martha, she could instantly name the book, chapter and verse. The neighbors relied on her to keep track of the ages of their children. Walter Davis was a protestant from northern Ireland. He was a small man with sparkling black eyes and a genial spirit. He was too old to fight in the revolutionary war, but his oldest son went into the army.

I can forgive Dr. Parks for his occasional flowery rhetoric. Following is a direct quotation, “All who personally knew Walter Davis regarded him with the utmost veneration and affection. He was an elder in the Presbyterian church and exercised almost boundless influence throughout his neighborhood. There was but little use for law or lawyers where he lived, for he managed to settle all difficulties by the law of love. In short, I doubt not, he is in the enjoyment of the blessings promised to the peacemaker.”

The three first cousins mentioned earlier are all grandchildren of Walter Davis and Martha. Daughter Martha married Brewer Reeves and gave birth to Benjamin Harrison Reeves. Daughter Euphemia married Charles Donly and gave birth to Martha Donly, who married Benjamin Harrison Reeves. Daughter Elizabeth married Joseph Parks and gave birth to Dr. Thomas Davis Parks.

There is no point in describing the lives of all of these people. However, Dr. Parks wrote a lot about his Aunt Martha. Her very interesting life helps explain the strong character of her son, Ben Reeves.

Brewer Reeves was Martha’s third husband. Her first husband died a year after they were married. Their only child died at the age of twenty. Frontier life was hard. People literally worked themselves to death. All kinds of diseases were there to speed the process. A widow at the age of 18, Martha waited a few years and then tried again. The second marriage produced three children, all of whom died of an epidemic fever along with her husband and several other members of his family.

At the age of 28 she married Brewer Reeves and had six more children in 16 years of marriage before he died. Once again she was a widow, and on the Kentucky frontier. She used venison for bread and bear flesh for meat. Flour was a luxury. They had to send sixty miles away to Nashville for meal.

Brewer Reeves did not leave his wife destitute. She had land, slaves and primitive comfort, but she lost everything except the land when a judgment was enforced on a debt that her husband had guaranteed. She also lost her only daughter and her favorite brother at the same time.

Let us once more hear Dr. Parks’ flavorful prose, “She did not sink. Her energies were aroused, and with what help she could obtain from her rude but kind neighbors, she managed to raise and educate so far as that rude country would allow, her four boys.”

Martha survived and raised her family for twenty more years before her son, Ben, took her to Missouri with him.

Dr. Parks visited with Martha in Kentucky when she was 63, and he was 16. After the move to Missouri, he was able to visit her every year until she died at the age of 86. He described her as being equal to any of the refined ladies he had met in spite of her frontier life. He wrote, “I had the privilege of spending much time in her company. To the end, I found her the same, cheerful, trusting, loving, intelligent, Christian woman, respected and beloved by all who knew her. Clergymen of different denominations, of fine mental culture, who visited her, admired her for her general intelligence, and were even astonished at her for the amount of her scriptural knowledge.”

As mentioned previously, Martha's daughter, Mary Elizabeth Reeves, married W. A. Wilson. Another daughter, Jeanette Reeves, married Judge Abiel Leonard. The two families were very close friends. As noted in chapter two, John Wilson frequently corresponded with the Leonards.

Abiel Leonard, attended Dartmouth University, graduating in 1816. He studied law in New York then came west in 1819, eventually settling in Fayette, Missouri. He was appointed States Attorney of Missouri in 1824 and justice of the Supreme Court in 1854. His home, Oakwood, is still standing.

Abiel arranged for his younger brother, Nathaniel, to come west in 1824 and acquire 80 acres of farmland. Abiel continued to offer financial help in the development of what eventually became Ravenswood Farm, still owned by the Leonard family 171 years later, now including almost 2,000 acres. The beautiful Ravenswood House is a major attraction, open to visitors.

A third brother, Benjamin Leonard, became a successful lawyer in Chillicothe, Ohio. They were all seventh generation descendants of James Leonard, who came to New England from Wales in 1643. James and his brother had been invited to America by John Winthrop and the Massachusetts Bay Colony to help establish an iron works. The family became very successful, establishing a large number of iron works over the next hundred years.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ADAIR WILSON

Adair Wilson's earlier years did not give any indication of his adventurous spirit. He was born November 16, 1841, attended Masonic College at Lexington, Missouri, graduated at the age of 17, the youngest in his class. Since his father and uncles were all lawyers, there was a good chance he might study law. It helped that he lived next door to Judge Abiel Leonard, his uncle by marriage. He studied two years with Judge Leonard and was admitted to the bar in 1860.

Adventure then called. Adair moved to San Francisco after a brief stop in Colorado. He studied law for two more years with Uncle John Wilson. Nobody can say why he then went in 1863 to Virginia City, Nevada to get a job as a newspaper reporter, but he did go, meeting Mark Twain in the process. Mark and Adair became lifelong friends. They frequently wrote to each other, and took advantage of every opportunity to visit whenever their travels brought them close. Adair is frequently mentioned in Mark Twain's writing during the Virginia City period. After a year and a half, Adair moved to Austin, Nevada, taking advantage of an opportunity to become the editor of the newspaper there.

Perhaps that was enough adventure for a while. Adair returned to San Francisco in 1865, planning to practice law. However, he was called home to Missouri when his father died that same year. Instead, he set up his law practice in Marshall, Missouri. He married Bettie Edwards June 9, 1868 and continued his law practice until 1872. Then adventure beckoned again to him. The railroad came to Denver, Colorado in 1870. With easy transportation available, the population of Colorado tripled between 1870 and 1875, and Colorado became a state in 1876.

Adair's family, which included an infant daughter, helped the population explosion. Three more children were born in Colorado. After a one year stopover in Pueblo, the family moved to the less developed area in the southwest of Colorado, the San Juan Basin. He made his home in Del Norte, later moving to the larger town of Durango. He lived in the San Juan area for 30 years. Active in politics, he was elected to the state legislature and was later appointed judge of the superior court. In 1876 he declined the nomination for governor by the democratic party.

An accomplished writer, he recorded much of the history of the San Juan area. After retirement because of ill health, he moved to San Francisco, where almost all of his writing was destroyed by the fire of 1906. He was asked to reproduce the material, but he was not up to the effort. The only writing of his that survived is a daily journal of his trip to Japan in 1901. He died at the home of his daughter, Kate, in 1912.

It must have been a wonderful experience in Virginia City for both Mark Twain and Adair, two intelligent and fun loving young men. In Mark Twain's writings, the first name of his companion was never used. "Young Wilson" was most common. If Twain was in a more fractious mood, Adair was simply referred to as "the unreliable" or "the unimportant".

Young Wilson was often in print the foil for Twain's humor of exaggeration. The following is from Twain's short story, "Curing A Cold" (1863):

“I found I had to travel for my health. I went to Lake Bigler with my reportorial comrade, Wilson. It is gratifying to me to reflect that we traveled in considerable style; we went in the Pioneer coach, and my friend took all his baggage with him, consisting of two excellent silk handkerchiefs and a daguerreotype of his grandmother. we sailed and hunted and fished and danced all day, and I doctored my cough all night. By managing in this way, I made out to improve every hour in the twenty-four. But my disease continued to grow worse.....

“But as I was saying, when the sheet bath failed to cure my cough, a lady friend recommended the application of a mustard plaster to my breast. I believe that would have cured me effectually, if it had not been for young Wilson. When I went to bed, I put my mustard plaster — which was a very gorgeous one, eighteen inches square — where I could reach it when I was ready for it. but young Wilson got hungry in the night, and — here is food for the imagination.”

Once in a while, Adair was able to turn the tables. One day Twain was sick and asked “The Unreliable” to substitute for him on Twain’s paper, The Enterprise. Under Twain’s by line Adair slipped the following into the paper:

He started with offering (in Twain’s name) a humble apology to several people specifically named, “besides a host of others whom we have ridiculed from behind the shelter of our reportorial position.... We ask their forgiveness, promising that in future we will give them no cause for anything but the best of feelings toward us. To ‘Young Wilson’ and ‘The Unreliable’ (as we have wickedly termed them) we feel that no apology we can make begins to atone for the many insults we have given them.”

Unfortunately for Adair, Mark Twain recovered sufficiently to trumpet in the next day’s paper, “We are to blame for giving “The Unreliable” an opportunity to misrepresent us, and therefore refrain from repining to any great extent at the result. We simply claim the right to deny the truth of every statement made by him in yesterday’s paper, to annul all apologies he coined as coming from us, and to hold him up to public commiseration as a reptile endowed with no more intellect, no more cultivation, no more Christian principle than animates and adorns the sportive jackass rabbit of the Sierras.”

Adair’s work in San Francisco and in Marshall, Missouri was no doubt interesting, but little is known about it. Surely, he was in the shadow of his famous uncles John and Robert. His importance after the brief period with Mark Twain is related to his time in Colorado. In 1875 he was elected to the council of the 11th and last territorial legislature and was made president thereof. Colorado was admitted to the Union a year later.

In 1876 Adair was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention that nominated Samuel J. Tilden for president. In 1896 he was elected a member of the Democratic National Committee. In that capacity he escorted his friend, William Jennings Bryan, on a tour of the San Juan country.

Throughout his Colorado career, Adair was recognized as being one of the most effective orators of his party. He was admired for his courteous manner, his legal ability, and his honesty.

The relationship between politicians and newspapers was not invented in the 20th century. Adair Wilson was heavily reported by the Durango Morning Herald while he was state senator. Following are quotes from several 1889 issues of the paper:

Feb. 6, 1889: "There are several hold over senators who to a certain extent formulate and control the action of the senate. Senator Wilson, although in the minority in political sense, is always found in his seat giving close attention to all matters that come. He is the most fluent talker in the senate and is ever ready to take part in debate. He has introduced a number of important bills which no doubt will pass."

March 2, 1889: "Senator Wilson made a noble fight on Monday for the soldiers' home to be located in the San Luis valley. The bill was being engineered by Denver real estate men, with the expectation that the bill would pass and the committee selected would locate the institution in or near Denver. Senator Wilson made an amendment providing for the home to be located someplace in the San Luis valley and succeeded in carrying the bill as amended. The real estate men were exceedingly wrathful and intimated that they would kill the bill in the house. The amendment is a good one. The appropriation of \$25,000 would hardly buy ten acres of land in the vicinity of Denver let alone the erection of buildings. In the amendment Senator Wilson guarantees the donation of twelve hundred acres. The \$25,000 can thus be used for the erection of a home, cottages, and improvements. The old soldier as a rule does not want to be cooped up but prefers to be able to cultivate land and do something to earn his living, and if the home includes twelve hundred acres of land, he can have his desires gratified."

March 8, 1889: "Colonel Price and Hon. J. P. Shaw of Rio Grande succeeded after a very hard fight in the House yesterday in passing Senator Wilson's amendments to House bill No. 1, locating the soldiers home in the San Luis valley. Three cheers for the southwest."

All was not sweetness and light between Adair and the newspaper.

January 8, 1889: Senator Adair Wilson introduced two bills last week, one for the protection of mountain trout by compelling the placement of screens at the heads of irrigation ditches, and the other is a high license bill, making a saloon license not less than \$1,200. Should the latter bill become a law, it will probably close every saloon in La Plata county outside of Durango and will also reduce the number to six or seven in this place."

It had been over 25 years since Mark Twain and Adair had fired verbal shots at each other in Virginia City. I am sure Adair would have loved to return to those days, taking dead aim at the Durango Morning Herald. Alas, the politician prevailed. He wrote a soothing letter to the editor, which was published in its entirety without editorial comment on January 13th. He opens with a detailed explanation of the financial terms of his bill, stating that the charge for Durango saloons would actually be \$500, with \$400 the charge for all other saloons in the county. He goes on to say that another town about the same size as Durango has had a license fee of \$1000 for some time. The result has been beneficial, with more revenue for the city and less disorder.

Adair goes on to say specifically, "It is rapidly becoming an issue in this state as elsewhere between prohibition and high license. One or the other must prevail.

“I don’t believe in prohibition, if for no other reason than in my opinion, experience has shown that attempted legislative prohibition does not prohibit. I therefore take the other horn of the dilemma, and favor moderate high license, at least to the extent of fixing a minimum so that there may be some degree of uniformity in this matter throughout the state.

“When my bill is printed, I will send you a copy with the hope that you will publish it in full for the information of your numerous readers, all of whom are interested in it.

Very respectfully,

ADAIR WILSON”

Of course, “what have you done for me lately” often prevails. The Herald was quite happy to print April 26, 1889 the following lament:

“Adair Wilson returned from Denver the first of the week. Our citizens have not tendered him any reception as yet, and there is not much likelihood of them doing so. The people of Durango have nothing to feel elated over in the action of a Representative and State Senator. In fact, we would have been better off had La Plata county not been represented in the late legislature. It is humiliating to have to state that neither of our representatives accomplished anything for this section, notwithstanding the fine start they made. They assisted Denver in giving us ‘soup’ as in the past. THE HERALD had the highest regard for Price and Wilson, but they forfeited that regard by their course in the legislature. May the good Lord deliver us from the hands of such men in the future.”

A much different view of Adair Wilson was expressed by Charles C. Holbrook in the “In Memoriam” that was filed with the Colorado Supreme Court to be made a part of the court records.

“I became acquainted with Mr. Wilson in the year 1876, and this acquaintance soon ripened into friendship, which lasted until his death. We lived in the same section of the state and were frequently together for days attending the courts in the various counties in southern Colorado, and I esteem it a great privilege to bear witness at this time to the many virtues which my esteemed friend possessed.

“One of those greathearted men whose interest in and love for his fellowman was unbounded, he was at all time ready to do a service for a friend or acquaintance and enlist in the advancement of the welfare and prosperity of every community in which he lived. The San Juan has had few men as well known throughout the state as Adair Wilson, and it was there his usefulness was demonstrated. He not only did much towards making known the resources of that great section, but to his efforts more than to those of any other is due the credit for securing from the Ute Indians a relinquishment of the Indian title to that great empire. Loyalty to his friends and to the community in which he resided were characteristic.

“A benevolent man, giving his legal services freely in the interests of justice to the oppressed who were not able to pay. Benevolent of his services to the community in many ways. For instance: In making a number of trips to the city of Washington for the purpose of securing concessions of lands to the whites from the Indians, this work sometimes requiring his stay in the city of Washington for months at a time, without compensation, and at a loss of retainers at

home. Aside from this he gave freely of his means, unostentatiously, not letting his left hand know what his right hand was doing.

“A humorous man with a fund of anecdote, he was the life of every gathering of which he was a member. The humorous side of a situation appealed to him, and his manner of relating an incident made even simple matters attractive. His wit was keen without the sting that sometimes accompanies wit.

“An able and successful lawyer, he was well grounded in legal principles — an indispensable asset of the lawyer. His practice on the frontier required attendance at terms of court widely separated, and he traveled the circuit and tried cases where the statutes of the state were the only law books to be found. This dearth of authorities had its merits, as it taught the lawyer to rely on legal principles and reason from that foundation, rather than to rely on legal precedents. The immense libraries at our command today do not, in my judgment, conduce to the making of able lawyers. Courts are too apt to require cases in point and not arguments based solely upon legal principles. The one has the tendency of making broad and comprehensive lawyers; the other of making the more technical lawyer.

“He was at his best in the trial of cases and could select a jury better than any other man I have ever known. Jurors of equal intelligence and honesty arrive at different conclusions upon the same evidence, the result depending largely upon the nationality, the environment under which their lives have been spent and many like matters. Wilson knew this and applied it in his practice with rare prescience. His acquaintance, his knowledge of men, his understanding of the motives which influence jurors, his oratory, won verdicts from juries where others would have failed.

“An upright, able and conscientious judge, quick to see the right and to brush aside technicality, while his diction is excelled by few. His opinions are to be found from Volume 9 to Volume 18 inclusive of the Reports of the Courts of Appeal.

“Above all he was a family man. His first consideration was always for his family, and no sacrifice was too great for him to make to advance their welfare.

“Judge Wilson was all that I have described and more. All honor to the memory of such a man. I ask that the resolutions be spread upon the records of this court as a mark of respect for his memory.”

CHAPTER NINE

BETTIE (EDWARDS) WILSON

Little is known about Bettie Wilson. Adair used Bettie's poor health as an excuse for not accepting the nomination to run for governor in 1876. Whatever illness she had was not fatal. She lived 55 years longer, dying in 1931.

We know that she raised four children while maintaining a large home in Durango. Many parties were given there. It was the way of life for the wife of an important politician.

Bettie has her own family history. Her father, Philip Williams Edwards was a cabinet maker. His father had emigrated from Wales to Leesburg, Virginia.

Bettie's mother also had immigrant roots tracing back to 1714. In that year the governor of Virginia recognized the need for men to work the iron mines that had been discovered. He sent an emissary to Germany to recruit skilled iron workers. Forty-two people answered the call and established the community of Germantown in Virginia. One of the leaders of the group was John Jacob Rector, the great great grandfather of Margaret (Rector) Edwards.

It is an interesting coincidence that both Bettie and Judge Abiel Leonard trace their ancestry back to immigrants who came to America to establish iron works.

Virginia to Missouri was one of the main line pioneer routes. It was followed by the Wilson family and also by the Edwards and Rector families. Like her husband, Bettie was born in Missouri.

APPENDIX I

EXCERPT FROM A TRIP TO THE ORIENT

BY ADAIR WILSON

A Trip To The Orient is mentioned in the Adair Wilson chapter as the only portion of his creative writing that survived the San Francisco fire of 1906. The entire work is over 100 pages long. It is worth reading in its entirety, a wonderful travelogue describing his journey with his wife and 16 year old daughter.

As an illustration of Adair Wilson's writing skills, an excerpt is included here. Adair is describing his impressions in 1901 as he arrived at Yokohama, Japan:

Directly before us lay the city of Yokohama, about three fourths of a mile distant,—with its population of about 185,000— stretching along the crescent shaped shore for several miles, from the water's edge to the tops of the high tree covered bluffs behind. As soon as we anchored, all of us saloon passengers entered the hotel launches, which had met us, and were landed at the Custom House pier. There we three took jin-rik-shas (one each) and were taken to the Grand Hotel (the house most frequented by foreigners). On our first ride in this vehicle, we felt a little queer, like we were doing something wrong in having a man draw us—a man doing the work of a beast. Before leaving we got somewhat accustomed to it, especially as we saw everybody else, native and foreigner, moving about in the same manner, and with perfect unconcern, as if it was a matter of course. The vehicles are two wheeled affairs, built just like our buggies, with a seat just wide enough for one person, with a top which may be raised or lowered and with shafts about three and one half feet long, closed at the end by a cross-bar against which the man pushes. It is very comfortable to travel in.

After registering at the hotel, and making some inquiries about places we wished to visit, we secured three more jin-rik-shas and struck out in single file. Mother headed the procession, then Margaretta, and I last. We first went to the office of the American Consul General. He was out, but his deputy received us very pleasantly. We then journeyed through various streets, both in that part of the city occupied by foreign merchants principally, and in that where were located exclusively native merchants, shopkeepers, tradesmen, mechanics etc., stopping at numerous places and making some purchases. The native stores and shops were plain and unpretentious looking, but inside were displayed the most lovely and beautiful goods. There were silk stores with magnificent silks and silken goods of every hue and pattern, art stores with a vast variety of articles of every description, and which we at home would consider priceless treasures, umbrella and fan stores, woodware stores, showing the loveliest cabinets and similar articles you ever saw, curio stores whose beautiful and fanciful contents it would require many hours to inspect, and so on ad infinitum. Everywhere we were treated with the most perfect courtesy and respect, from the humblest artisan and clerk to the richest merchant. I believe the Japanese are the politest people in the world.

The streets are narrow, but well kept, smooth and clean. They were very firm, being either rolled or beaten down or covered with something,—not asphalt, however,—or in some manner macadamized, I could not tell which. At each side is a well constructed stone gutter.

My chief criticism of the Japanese is that the men of the lower class, that is, those who have to earn their livelihood by manual labor, mechanics of all kinds, shoemakers, laborers, boatmen, fishermen etc. do not wear enough clothes,—literally, not enough to wad a shotgun. A tailor would starve here. We passed many, many shops where the men were sitting around or working in plain view, the fronts of the shops being entirely open, and wearing breech clouts, and scanty ones at that, no more efficient in covering nakedness than the fig leaves which Adam and Eve wore, according to scriptural lore. At first the sight is a little shocking to American or European eyes, but you soon get accustomed to it. After all, even refined and educated man is a very pliable and plastic creature, and could soon get accustomed and reconciled to anything. After two hours journeying about, seeing all kinds of curious, strange and interesting things and human beings, we returned to the hotel and had luncheon.

APPENDIX II

GENEALOGICAL CHARTS

Included in this appendix are the following charts:

1. William Wilson – descendancy chart. This lists all descendants of William Wilson known to the author
2. William Wilson – family group. This includes William Wilson and his wife and children.
3. Adair Wilson – family group. This includes Adair Wilson and his wife and children. Note that Margaretta (Wilson) Hotchkiss is the author's mother.
4. Margaretta Wilson pedigree. This lists all the parents, grandparents, great grandparents, and great great grandparents of Margaretta Wilson.

Sources:

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San Francisco Daily Evening Post, Feb 3, 1877
San Francisco Daily Evening Post, Feb 5, 1877
San Francisco Alta California, Feb 4, 1877
Theodore S. Hittell, History of California (1897)
The Great Klamath Swindle, Leo Rosenhouse, California Highway Patrolman, December, 1970
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Oakland Post Enquirer March 20, 1928
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Personal correspondence of:

Annette D. Dabney
Katherine G. Bushman
Pam Clark
Marilyn J. Gross
Ophelia Wilson Harkness
General John Wilson
Family records in my possession

James M. Hotchkiss Jr.
Orinda, California
August 20, 1995

DESCENDANCY CHART

18 Aug 1995

Page 1

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=====
1-- William WILSON (1750-1823)
   sp-Catharine YANCEY ( -1830)
   2-- John WILSON (1790-1877)
      sp-Ann R. PULLIAN (1803-1877)
      3-- Susan WILSON (1820)
         sp-Henry L. FORD
      3-- Micajah D. WILSON (1831-1858)
      3-- Mary Eliza WILSON (1836-1877)
         sp-F. O. WAKEMAN
            4-- Kate Inge WAKEMAN (1857-1927)
               sp-COOPER
            4-- Maude Campbell WAKEMAN (1866-1871)
      3-- Robert WILSON (1842-1877)
   sp-Martha T. (Patsy) WOODS
   sp-MCCOUN ( -1831)
      3-- David WILSON (1813-1887)
         sp-Mary Jane ALMON ( -1848)
         sp-Sarah Clark HILL (1826-1886)
            4-- Priscilla David WILSON (1855)
            4-- Mary Eliza WILSON (1856-1859)
            4-- Susan Ann WILSON (1858)
            4-- Elizabeth Talbot WILSON (1860-1881)
            4-- John David WILSON (1862-1934)
            4-- James Wesley WILSON (1865-1951)
      3-- John WILSON ( -1877)
2-- David WILSON (1792-1844)
   sp-Margaret KINNEAR
2-- Mary (Polly) WILSON (1796)
   sp-Samuel S. GROVE ( -1858)
      3-- William I. GROVE (1823)
      3-- Robert W. GROVE (1828)
         sp-Susan B. DUGGINS
      3-- Susan J. GROVE (1832)
      3-- Belinda C. GROVE (1835)
         sp-H. C. HAYDEN
2-- Robert WILSON (1800-1870)
   sp-Martha SNODDY ( -1837)
2-- Nancy WILSON (1803-1824)
   sp-Lewis LOOP ( -1845)
2-- William Adair WILSON (1807-1865)
   sp-Mary Elizabeth REEVES (1817)
      3-- Benjamin Harrison WILSON (1836)
         sp-Olive A. HOWELL (1849)
            4-- William A. WILSON (1869)
            4-- Bernice WILSON (1870-1884)
            4-- Maud WILSON (1872)
            4-- Genevieve WILSON (1874)
            4-- Benjamin WILSON (1874-1875)
      3-- Martha Catharine (Kate) WILSON (1839-1866)
         sp-John Bright GROVE (1829-1882)
            4-- Ada GROVE (1860)
            4-- Florence GROVE (1862)
            4-- Katie GROVE (1866)
      3-- Adair WILSON (1841-1912)
         sp-Margaret Eliza (Bettie) EDWARDS (1844-1931)
            4-- Mary Eleanor WILSON (1869-1872)
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DESCENDANCY CHART

18 Aug 1995

Page 2

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=====
4-- Katharine Thompson (Kate) WILSON (1872-1949)
   sp-Austin H. BROWN
     5-- Wilson J. BROWN (1894)
       sp-Helen OLMSTEAD
     5-- Austin Adair BROWN (1897)
       sp-Nell BROWN
4-- Edwards Adair WILSON (1874-1950)
   sp-Bessie WILHELM
     5-- Adair WILSON (1909)
     5-- William Edwards WILSON (1913)
4-- Alva Adams WILSON (1879)
   sp-Alice Cathryn SWASEY (1879)
     5-- Francis Adair WILSON (1907)
4-- Margaretta WILSON (1885-1962)
   sp-James Miller HOTCHKISS (1881-1952)
     5-- William Joseph (Bill) HOTCHKISS (1919-1972)
       sp-Margaret (Peggy) DOUGLAS (1919)
         6-- William Joseph III HOTCHKISS ([living])
           sp-Carole Lynn CURRIER ([living])
             7-- Jeffrey William (Jeff) HOTCHKISS ([living])
             7-- Diane Lynn HOTCHKISS ([living])
           sp-James (Jim) BAIRD
             8-- Madison Abbygale BAIRD ([living])
         6-- Douglas Stephen (Doug) HOTCHKISS ([living])
           sp-Mary Adella DUNBAR
             7-- Kimberly Ann (Kim) HOTCHKISS (living)
             sp-Thom DIETZ ([living])
             7-- Teresa Marie (Teri) HOTCHKISS ([living])
           sp-??
             8-- Ashley Jane CONTRERAS ([living])
           sp-Lance Robert PORTER
             8-- Justin PORTER ([living])
           sp-Mary Lee WILSON ([living])
           sp-Karen LAMAKA
         6-- Lauren Sean HOTCHKISS ([living])
           sp-Kathleen M. PEICHOTO
         5-- James Miller HOTCHKISS Jr. (1927)
           sp-Isabel Gandarillas MORUZA (1925)
             6-- Joseph Alva HOTCHKISS ([living])
               sp-Barbara Jane MILLER
                 7-- Sarah Ann HOTCHKISS ([living])
                 7-- Beth Ann HOTCHKISS ([living])
               sp-Rosabel Verla (Rose) NEWTON ([living])
             6-- Edward Adair HOTCHKISS ([living])
               sp-Barbara IMHOFF ([living])
               sp-Lisa Ann MEISSNER ([living])
3-- Annette (Annie) WILSON (1843)
   sp-John R. VANCE
3-- Horace Everett WILSON (1846)
3-- Leonard WILSON (1846)
   sp-Mary A. SANDRIDGE (1851)
     4-- Lennie WILSON (1873)
3-- Mary L. WILSON (1849)
3-- Byrd Lincoln WILSON (1860)
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FAMILY GROUP RECORD

Page 1 of 2

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HUSBAND William WILSON

BORN: Abt 1750 PLACE: ,Augusta Co.,Virginia
 CHR.: PLACE:
 DIED: Abt 1823 PLACE: Fayette,Howard Co.,Missouri
 BUR.: PLACE:
 MARR: PLACE: Charleston, ,South Carolina
 FATHER: Robert WILSON
 MOTHER: Mary

=====

WIFE Catharine YANCEY

BORN: PLACE: , ,South Carolina
 CHR.: PLACE:
 DIED: Aft 1830 PLACE: ,Randolph Co.,Missouri
 BUR.: PLACE:
 FATHER:
 MOTHER:

=====

CHILDREN

1. NAME: John WILSON
 - - - BORN: 28 Jan 1790 PLACE: , ,Tennessee
 M CHR.: PLACE:
 DIED: 2 Feb 1877 PLACE: Suisun,Solano Co.,California
 BUR.: PLACE: has other marriage(s)
 SPOUSE: Ann R. PULLIAN
 MARR: Aft 1817 PLACE:

2. NAME: David WILSON
 - - - BORN: 12 Jul 1792 PLACE: ,probably Augusta,Virginia
 M CHR.: PLACE:
 DIED: 1844 PLACE: ,Prob.Saline or H,Missouri
 BUR.: PLACE:
 SPOUSE: Margaret KINNEAR
 MARR: 3 Jun 1819 PLACE: ,Rockbridge Co.,Virginia

3. NAME: Mary (Polly) WILSON
 - - - BORN: 2 Aug 1796 PLACE: ,Augusta Co.,Virginia
 F CHR.: PLACE:
 DIED: PLACE:
 BUR.: PLACE:
 SPOUSE: Samuel S. GROVE
 MARR: 16 Nov 1818 PLACE:

4. NAME: Robert WILSON
 - - - BORN: 6 Nov 1800 PLACE: ,Augusta Co.,Virginia
 M CHR.: PLACE:
 DIED: 10 May 1870 PLACE: ,Saline Co.,Missouri
 BUR.: PLACE:
 SPOUSE: Martha SNODDY
 MARR: 13 May 1826 PLACE: ,Howard Co.,Missouri

James M. Hotchkiss, Jr.
 [address removed]
 Orinda, California 94563

Relationship to:

Husband_____

Phone: [removed]

Wife_____

Date prepared: 18 Aug 1995

FAMILY GROUP RECORD

18 Aug 1995

Page 2 of 2

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=====
HUSBAND William WILSON                      Yr of Birth 1750
WIFE      Catharine YANCEY                  Yr of Birth
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CHILDREN (continued)

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=====
5.  NAME: Nancy WILSON
--- BORN: 23 May 1803          PLACE: ,Augusta Co.,Virginia
F   CHR.:                    PLACE:
    DIED:    Aft 1824          PLACE:
    BUR.:                    PLACE:
    SPOUSE: Lewis LOOP
    MARR: 15 Sep 1824          PLACE: ,Augusta Co.,Virginia
-----
6.  NAME: William Adair WILSON
--- BORN: 17 Dec 1807          PLACE: ,Augusta Co.,Virginia
M   CHR.:                    PLACE:
    DIED: 28 Aug 1865          PLACE: Marshall,Saline Co.,Missouri
    BUR.:                    PLACE: Ridge Park Cemet,Marshall,Missouri
    SPOUSE: Mary Elizabeth REEVES
    MARR: 4 Jun 1835          PLACE: Fayette,Howard Co.,Missouri
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FAMILY GROUP RECORD

Page 1 of 2

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HUSBAND Adair WILSON

BORN: 16 Nov 1841 PLACE: Old Jefferson, Saline Co., Missouri
CHR.: PLACE:
DIED: 7 Jan 1912 PLACE: Berkeley, Alameda Co., California
BUR.: PLACE:
MARR: 9 Jun 1868 PLACE: Arrow Rock, Saline Co., MO
FATHER: William Adair WILSON
MOTHER: Mary Elizabeth REEVES
=====

WIFE Margaret Eliza (Bettie) EDWARDS

BORN: 5 Oct 1844 PLACE: , Pettis Co., Missouri
CHR.: PLACE:
DIED: 18 Jul 1931 PLACE: Berkeley, Alameda Co., California
BUR.: PLACE:
FATHER: Philip Williams EDWARDS
MOTHER: Margaret RECTOR
=====

CHILDREN

1. NAME: Mary Eleanor WILSON
--- BORN: 18 Oct 1869 PLACE: Marshall, Saline, Missouri
F CHR.: PLACE:
DIED: 11 Mar 1872 PLACE: Marshall, Saline, Missouri
BUR.: PLACE: Ridge Park Cem., Marshall, Missouri
SPOUSE:
MARR: PLACE:
-----2. NAME: Katharine Thompson (Kate) WILSON
--- BORN: 25 Feb 1872 PLACE: Marshall, Saline, Missouri
F CHR.: PLACE:
DIED: 23 Dec 1949 PLACE:
BUR.: PLACE:
SPOUSE: Austin H. BROWN
MARR: 18 Apr 1893 PLACE: Durango, , CO
-----3. NAME: Edwards Adair WILSON
--- BORN: 2 Feb 1874 PLACE: Del Norte, Rio Grande Co., CO
M CHR.: PLACE:
DIED: 3 Nov 1950 PLACE:
BUR.: PLACE:
SPOUSE: Bessie WILHELM
MARR: 18 Jul 1908 PLACE: Redding, , California
-----4. NAME: Alva Adams WILSON
--- BORN: 11 Jun 1879 PLACE: Del Norte, Rio Grande Co., CO
M CHR.: PLACE:
DIED: PLACE: , , California
BUR.: PLACE:
SPOUSE: Alice Cathryn SWASEY
MARR: 4 Jul 1903 PLACE: San Francisco, , California
=====James M. Hotchkiss, Jr.
[address removed]
Orinda, California 94563

Relationship to:

Husband _____

Wife _____

Date prepared: 18 Aug 1995

FAMILY GROUP RECORD

18 Aug 1995

Page 2 of 2

=====	
HUSBAND Adair WILSON	Yr of Birth 1841
WIFE Margaret Eliza (Bettie) EDWARDS	Yr of Birth 1844
=====	

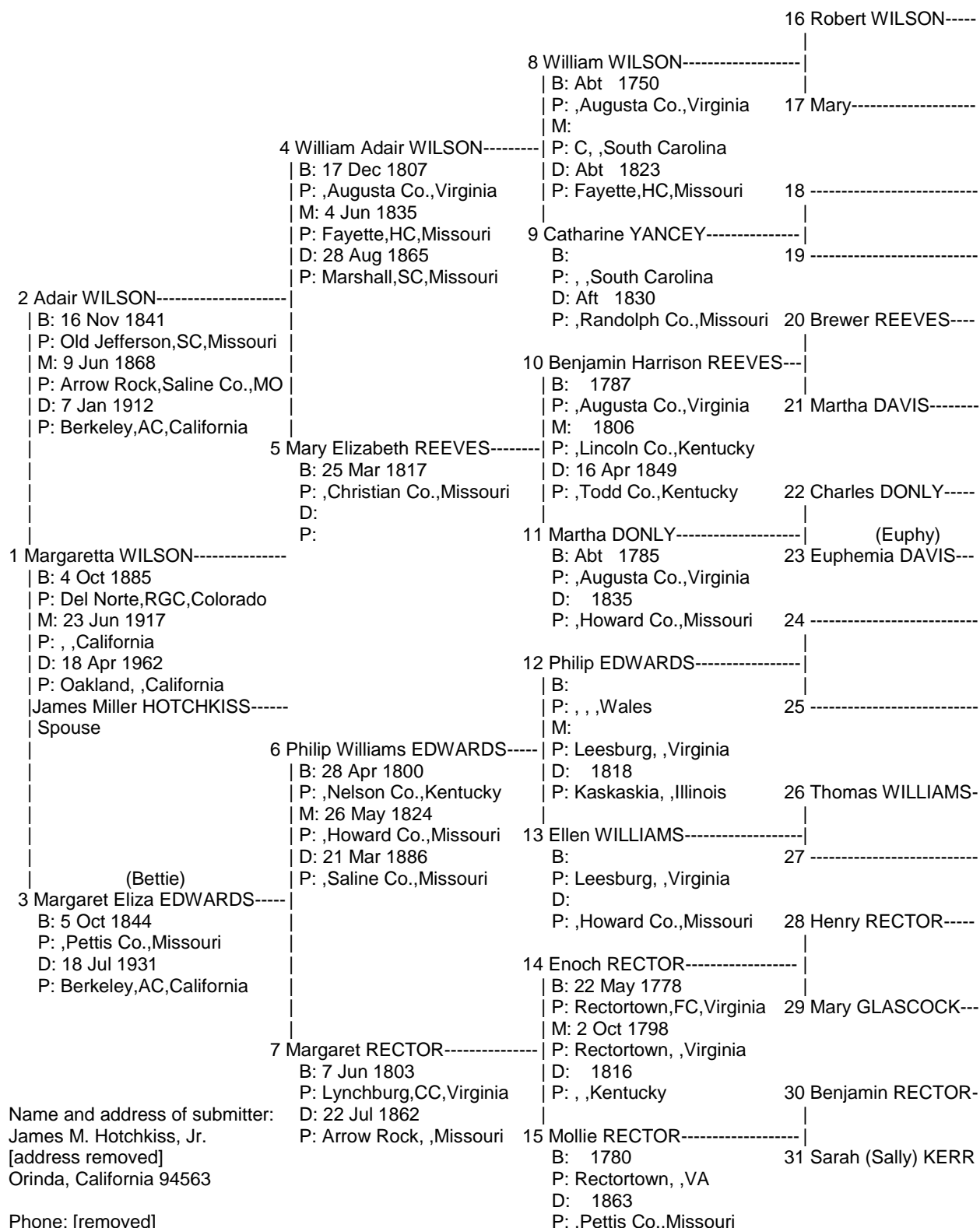
CHILDREN (continued)

=====	
5. NAME: Margaretta WILSON	
---- BORN: 4 Oct 1885	PLACE: Del Norte,Rio Grande Co.,Colorado
F CHR.:	PLACE:
DIED: 18 Apr 1962	PLACE: Oakland, ,California
BUR.:	PLACE:
SPOUSE: James Miller HOTCHKISS	
MARR: 23 Jun 1917	PLACE: , ,California
=====	

PEDIGREE CHART

18 Aug 1995

Chart no. 1





Adair Wilson